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Social Influences on Behavior Change

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SOCIAL INFLUENCES ON BEHAVIOR CHANGE

By: Regina Schreiber

WHAT IS SOCIAL INFLUENCE? AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- A process where a person's attitudes, opinions, beliefs, or behavior are altered or controlled by some form of social communication
 - **Conformity**- goal is group acceptance or sense of belongingness
 - **Normative Conformity**- embrace or accept other people's beliefs to fit in

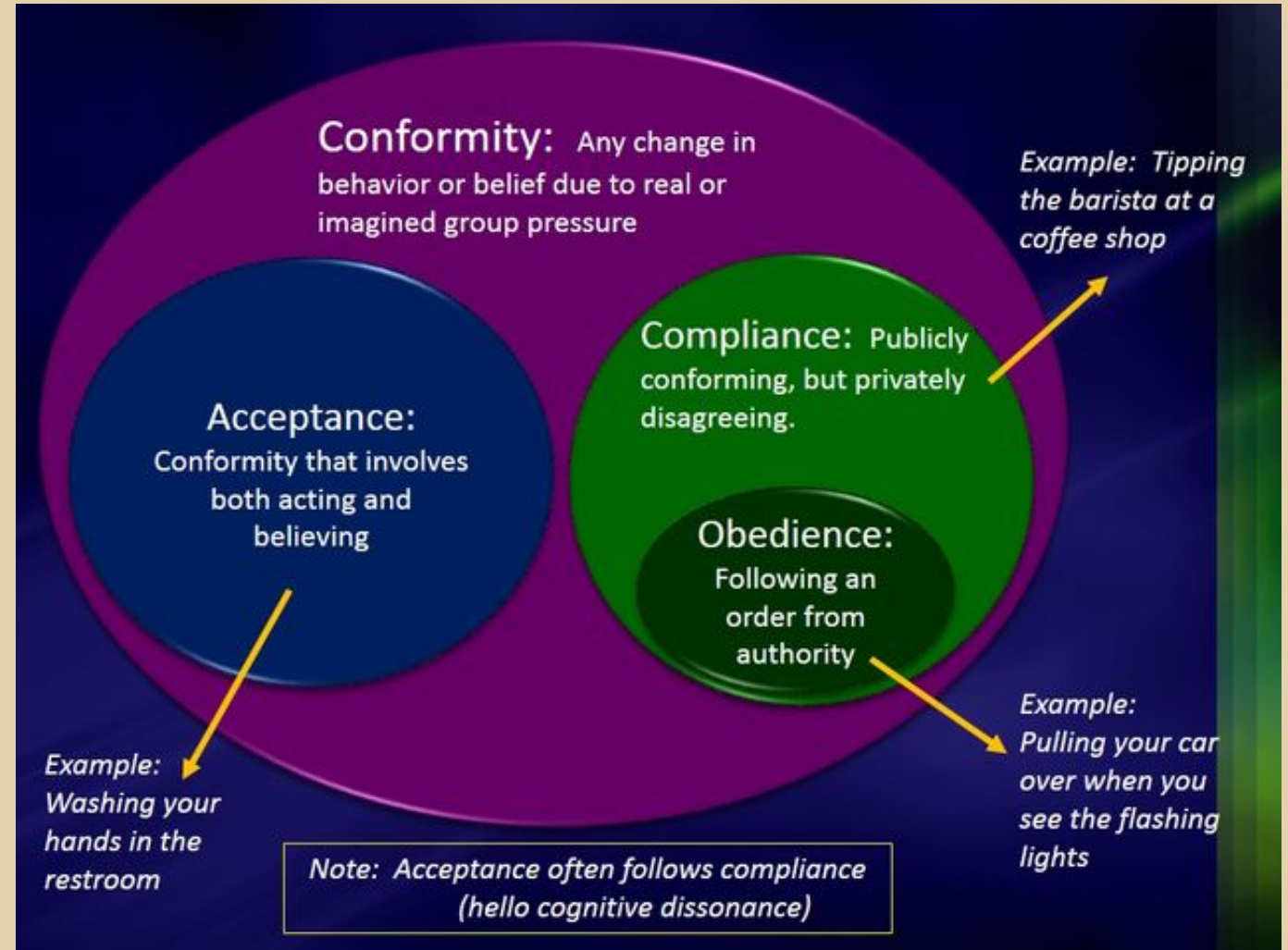
Example : Changing dietary or exercise habits to be like other people

- **Compliance**- changing behavior but still internally disagreeing
- Examples : Eating certain foods considered “healthy” just because that's what other people are say you “should” do, but not actually believing in the value of it for you personally
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MOVING FROM COMPLIANCE TO ACCEPTANCE

- First we may exercise because **peers/family say we “SHOULD”** (conformity or compliance) BUT over time we may exercise because **we believe in the health benefits** (acceptance)
- Behavior reflects attitudes = ACCEPTANCE 😊



WHY IS MOVING FROM COMPLIANCE TO ACCEPTANCE IMPORTANT FOR BEHAVIOR CHANGE?

There are three main components that influence our intention to engage in a behavior

Our own attitudes towards the behavior

Perceived social pressures to engage in the behavior

Perceived control we have over actually doing the dang thing!



Positive attitudes + favorable social norms = More perceived control



Higher Perceived control → Greater Intention to Change Behavior!



SOCIAL INFLUENCE IN GOAL SETTING

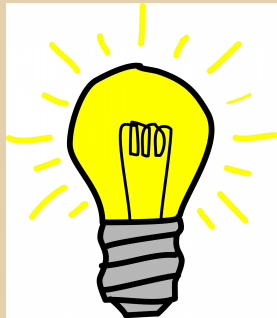
- Other people can help us achieve independent goals we set for ourselves
 - Accountability
 - Help us plan
 - Encouragement
 - We might make joint goals with other people
 - Working towards goals with another person can increase motivation
 - Need to be careful to make sure that one person is not undermining the joint goal pursuit or else it may not be as beneficial!
 - Even independent goals can be socially influenced → people perform better on tasks after having positive social interactions with others
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SOCIAL INFLUENCES: CO-ACTION EFFECTS, WHAT'S THAT?

- People perform better on tasks when others are present and engaging in the same task
 - Goes along with setting goals with other people

Examples: When exercising, people may have a better workout if others are there doing it with them

Research shows that we will eat more food when there are others present who are also eating



**If we put ourselves around others who are eating healthier foods, we might
choose to eat more healthy foods too!**

MAIN POINTS ON SOCIAL INFLUENCE



We may first change behavior to fit in, but then internalize that behavior change and accept it for ourselves



Positive attitudes about behavior + positive social pressures increase the control we believe we have over our behavior which increases our intention to do the behavior



Setting goals with others or allowing others to help us achieve our own goals can increase our motivation



Engaging in a behavior that others are doing at the same time can improve our performance

QUESTIONS???
